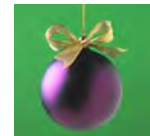




New Hampshire Farm Service Agency News



Volume 3, Issue 4

December 2005

NH Farm Bill Listening Forum — A Success



Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr, Rural Development State Director Jolinda LaClair (seated), Farm Bill Forum Moderator Fred Kocher and FSA State Executive Director Robb Thomson

Despite a Nor'easter, more than 100 interested persons turned out for the USDA Farm Bill Listening Forum held in Manchester, New Hampshire on October 25, 2005. The forum was hosted by USDA Rural Development Under Secretary Thomas Dorr. This was Mr. Dorr's second visit to NH having addressed the 2002 annual meeting of the NH Farm Bureau.

Joining Under Secretary Dorr at the outset of the forum were Congressmen Charlie Bass and Jeb Bradley. They both stressed the importance of farm and forestry issues in their districts. Commissioner of Agriculture,

Markets and Food Steve Taylor provided his broad perspective of issues important to NH agricultural producers. He too joined Mr. Dorr on stage during the listening session.

Over 40 speakers lined up to make remarks regarding the next farm bill. The comment portion began with Jessica Nappo, FFA member Becky Davis, a former 4-H member, and Jamie Robertson, 4-H leader and dairy farmer, responding to the question "How should farm policy address any unintended consequences that discourage the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?"

The importance of maintaining a strong land grant Extension structure was cited by several speakers as critical to keeping NH producers competitive and in developing the next generation of successful farmers. Funding for land conservation, the value of forestry, and the importance of a safety net for dairy farmers were among some of the issues for which comments were provided.

Moderating the forum was Fred Kocher, a business program host for WMUR television. The forum began with the posting of the colors by the Manchester Central High School Color Guard, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by 4-H members Charles Aznive, Cacia King and Morgan King. The National Anthem was sung by Kalie Cronin, a junior at Manchester Central High School.

Under Secretary Dorr noted that, since Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns kicked off this series of Farm Bill Listening Forums, there had been tremendous interest and participation all around the country.



*New Hampshire embraces the holiday season
under a freshly fallen blanket of snow.
Peace and joy to all in the coming year.*

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 NH Farm Bill Listening Forum — A Success
- 1 Holiday Greeting
- 2 Small & Beginning Farmers Conference
- 2 Employee Training
- 3 Geographic Information Systems
- 3 New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference
- 3 FSA Administrator Appointed
- 4 NRCS Recognizes FSA Employees' Efforts
- 4 Deputy Administrator for Field Operations Appointed

Small & Beginning Farmers Conference



NH FSA was pleased to be a co-sponsor for the 2nd annual Northern New England Small and Beginning Farmers Conference held in Waterville Valley at the Snowy Owl Inn. The two-day event was organized and sponsored by the North Country and Southern NH Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils, and the Beginner Farmers of NH. FSA hosted an agency booth at the conference, and District

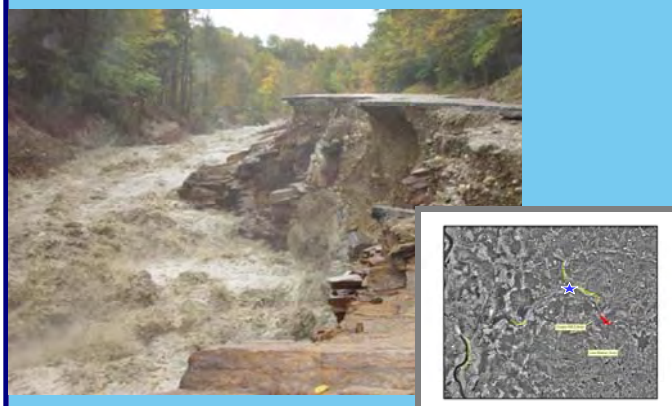
Director Ken Gustin provided financial program information during one of the workshops. The workshops included such diverse areas as buy local campaigns, small scale grain growing, programs for beginner farmers, on-farm apprenticeships and internship programs, getting a start on your farm's business plan, and starting a CSA (Cooperative Supported Agriculture).

Joel Salatin of Polyface Farm in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley was the keynote speaker. He also provided informative sessions on relationship marketing, a model farm and pasture based livestock. Mr. Salatin's experiences as a speaker and author of several books made him a huge success with attendees.

Employee Training

On December 6, all New Hampshire FSA employees gathered for training held in conjunction with the State Committee Meeting. Coos-Carroll County CED Irene Schmidt spoke to the group on her attendance at a public meeting sponsored by NH Health and Human Services personnel. The main focus of the October 21 forum was to prepare the public in the event of a pandemic brought on by Avian Influenza.

High water on Warren Brook, hours after the flood came through. Remains of Route 123 are in the upper right corner.



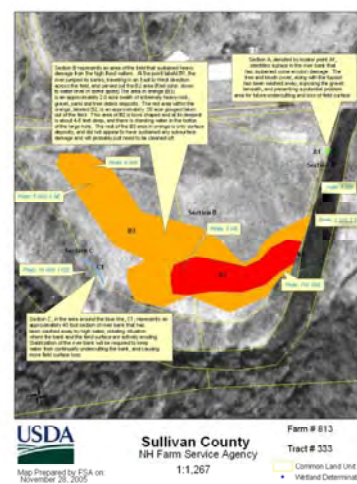
Farm #813, field #3, sustained quite a bit of damage from the Cold River. For this one field, several GPS features were used to create the basis for the information seen here. There were a few different issues in this one field, so these areas were separated out into three regions: Section A, Section B, and Section C.

Section A was located by using a "waypoint" in GPS. Because it was a relatively small area of damage, a waypoint was all that was needed.

Section B was a more complex, and so the tracking in GPS was used again. There were two areas within Section B that were delineated, B2 and B3. (B1 was just used as a point of reference in the notes, and was not located with GPS). Two separate "tracks" were made here: one, B3 was the perimeter of gravel that was deposited on the field when the river jumped its banks (at point B1) and crossed the field east to west, leaving in its wake, rock, gravel and sand on the surface of the field. The second area, B2, was a subset within B3, outlined an area where the flood waters actually gouged the field.

Section C suffered from a different problem. A small offshoot of the Cold River cuts in close to the field at this point and the high waters undercut the field, causing a collapse of a 40 foot section of field/riverbank. Tracking was used to walk to length of the field here, and produced the linear footage affected.

**Using GPS, along with taking good notes and photos, makes reconstructing what was seen in the field can be made much easier.



Cheshire-Sullivan County Program Technician Gail Golec presented a slide show depicting the damage caused by the severe October flooding in the southwestern part of NH. Utilizing GPS and GIS technology, she showed the destruction to the farmland, homes, and infrastructure in that part of the state.

Our guest speaker was Dr. Stephen Crawford. He gave an informative overview of his extensive responsibilities as New Hampshire's State Veterinarian. Dr. Crawford described a litany of diseases for which the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food has to be ever vigilant. Of particular concern this year, were Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus. He also covered Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), Food and Mouth Disease (FMD), and Avian Influenza. Dr. Crawford relocated here from California with his family. He took over as the state veterinarian in July replacing the retiring Dr. Clifford McGinnis.



Stephen Crawford, NH State Veterinarian



GIS Information Exchange

On November 29, representatives from New Hampshire Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rural Development (RD) and FSA met to discuss Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The meeting took place in Concord at the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. The goal of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of what GIS data is available and where to find it. The exchange also provided the opportunity to become familiar with projects each agency is working on and their future GIS plans. Don Richard from NRCS and Marilyn Norton from FSA both gave presentations. Gary Beem from RD led a discussion on RD's plans for GIS and Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS).

Other GIS Conferences

Marilyn Norton represented FSA at the GIS Day – Geo-spatial Science Conference and College Fair held at the University of New Hampshire on November 16th. Hundreds of GIS users, presenters and vendors gathered at UNH for presentations and displays. While at the fair, Marilyn also took part in a NH ArcUser group meeting. The group meets 2 – 3 times a year to discuss new trends in GIS and local projects.

On November 8th, Marilyn attended a regional GIS User group conference in Danvers, MA hosted by ESRI, Environmental Systems Research Institute. The day was filled with presentations from vendors and local users. Topics covered included training from ESRI on new applications, GPS and ways in which local groups are using GIS.



The New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference was held this month at the Radisson Hotel in Manchester. Sponsored by Cooperative Extension, it included 24 educational sessions, covering major vegetable, berry and tree fruit crops as well as various special topics. FSA was well represented by employees over the three day conference at the Trade Show. Shown at left are Merrimack-Belknap County CED Kathleen Dole and Loan Specialist Michael Dragunas, from Massachusetts, who provided information on FSA's programs and services to conference attendees on day two of the conference.

FSA Administrator Appointed

In October, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns appointed Teresa Lasseter as the new Administrator of the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

"Teresa Lasseter's experience at the local, state and federal levels, combined with her personal involvement with agriculture, provide her with tremendous insight and an ability to lead the Farm Service Agency into the future," said Johanns. "Her commitment to service fits perfectly with the agency's long tradition of serving America's farmers and ranchers."

Teresa Lasseter is a Georgia native who served as the State Executive Director in that state from 2001 to 2003. She was later appointed as Associate Administrator for farm programs in Washington, D.C. Her extensive field experience with the agency includes positions as a Program Assistant, Chief Program Assistant, County Operations Reviewer and County Executive Director.



Teresa Lasseter
Administrator



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Thanks to all who contributed to this issue.

NRCS Recognizes FSA Employees' Efforts

It's always a good feeling when the agency you work for acknowledges your hard work, but it's particularly gratifying to be honored by people in another agency. Linda Grames and Irene Schmidt are two FSA employees who recently received awards for their extra efforts from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Coos-Carroll County Executive Director Irene Schmidt received an NRCS certificate for team effort. Irene assisted NRCS District Conservationist Nels Liljedahl with the paperwork involved in processing a large number of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) applications.

State Office Administrative Officer/Program Specialist Linda Grames was honored with a 2005 Outstanding Partner Award. Linda was cited for her contributions and support provided to the NRCS over the past year for EQIP.

Warm congratulations to both of you!



Steven Connelly, DAFO

Deputy Administrator for Field Operations Appointed

Steven Connelly is the new Deputy Administrator for Field Operations for the Farm Service Agency, effective December 6, 2005. Connelly replaced Doug Frago who has retired.

As Deputy Administrator for Field Operations, Connelly is responsible for developing and implementing personnel policies and operating guidelines for state and field FSA employees.

Prior to this appointment, the Maryland native served as FSA's Assistant Deputy Administrator for farm programs since June 2004. Before relocating to FSA's national office, he served as Maryland FSA State Executive Director starting in December 2001.

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